

How to Use Mealtime Memos for Training

Ongoing staff training and professional development is essential for high-quality child care. According to the National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) a “well-trained and educated child care workforce is needed to meet the increasing demand for high-quality child care in the United States to ensure that children start school ready to learn.”

Child care workers provide services to families of young children in a variety of settings, including public and private centers, pre-kindergarten programs, home-based child care, and after-school programs. In all of these settings, nutrition and foodservice are a daily and vitally important part of the care provided to children.

While workers involved in food preparation require specialized training in food handling and safety, all child care staff members need a basic understanding of the role of nutrition in optimal child growth and development. They also need training in appropriate feeding practices throughout childhood.

Regulations on staff training and professional development in child care programs vary widely from state to state. However, several national programs, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Head Start Performance Standards, require ongoing training in nutrition. Others, such as the Council for Professional Recognition’s Child Development Associate Program, recommend education in physical health, including nutrition, as part of their certification.

Using Mealtime Memos in Child Care Training

Mealtime Memos, published online as PDFs, are a newsletter for child care providers participating in CACFP. *Mealtime Memos*, available in English and Spanish, feature a wide variety of topics related to child nutrition, such as menus, *USDA Recipes for Child Care*, and classroom activities. *Mealtime Memos* offer accurate, practical, hands-on nutrition resources for child care programs using many methods of training. The diversity of topics and range of activities is what makes *Mealtime Memos* such a valuable training resource for child care programs. *Mealtime Memos*, archived on the National Food Service Management Institute’s (NFSMI) Web site at www.nfsmi.org, provide the perfect materials for nutrition training in your program.



Mealttime Memo FOR CHILD CARE

For a checklist to evaluate the appropriateness of materials for CACFP training, see *CACFP Training Resource Checklist*. You can find it at www.nfsmi.org.

Do you want to use *Mealttime Memos* in training on *MyPyramid*?

USDA's newest food guide for young children is *MyPyramid for Preschoolers* and is available at www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers. Introduced in October 2008, this guide for children 2 to 5 years of age is specifically designed to help parents and caregivers ensure that preschoolers eat well, are active, and stay healthy.

The archives of *Mealttime Memos* extend back to 2000. That means that there are dozens of newsletters with activities for almost every important training topic in child care. Here is just a small sampling of the types of resources available to you and easy ways to use them in nutrition training opportunities.

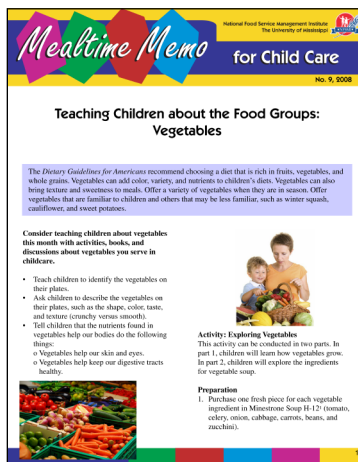
Five issues listed below from the 2008 *Mealttime Memos* allow you to present each food group in several different ways.

For example:

GRAINS: Make half your grains whole.

No. 4, 2008: Teaching Children about Food Groups: Grains/Breads

- ❖ Use the book *From Wheat to Bread* to discuss differences between whole and refined grains. Ask the child care staff to identify whole grains on menus served to children.



VEGETABLES: Vary your veggies.

No. 9, 2008: Teaching Children about the Food Groups: Vegetables

- ❖ Discuss how vegetables grow using either picture cards or actual vegetables. Ask staff to identify different types of vegetables on menus served to children.

FRUITS: Focus on fruits.

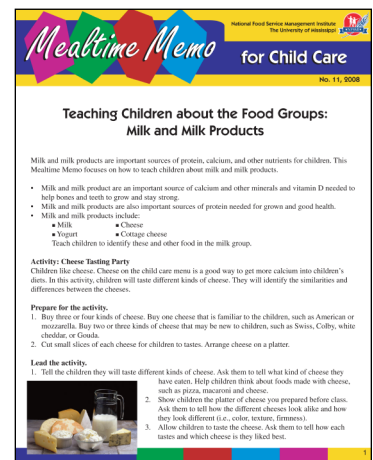
No. 8, 2008: Teaching Children about the Food Groups: Fruits

- ❖ Demonstrate the Food Activity: Grab Bag with real fruit or pictures that staff has cut from magazines. Ask the child care staff to identify different fruits on menus served to children.

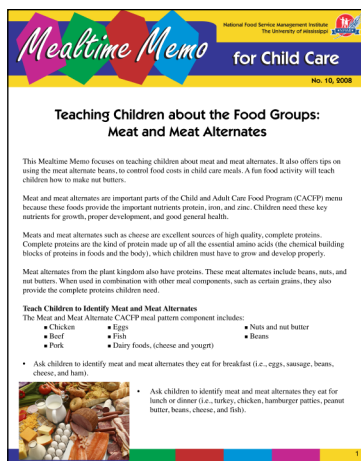
MILK: Get your calcium-rich foods.

No. 11, 2008: Teaching Children about the Food Groups: Milk and Milk Products

- ❖ Demonstrate Activity: Cheese Tasting Party. Ask staff to identify different ways that cheese is used on menus served to children.



Mealtime Memo FOR CHILD CARE



MEAT and BEANS: Go lean with protein.

No. 10, 2008: Teaching Children about the Food Groups: Meat and Meat Alternates

- ❖ Review the importance of lean proteins for growing children. Ask the child care staff to identify meat and meat alternates on menus served to children.

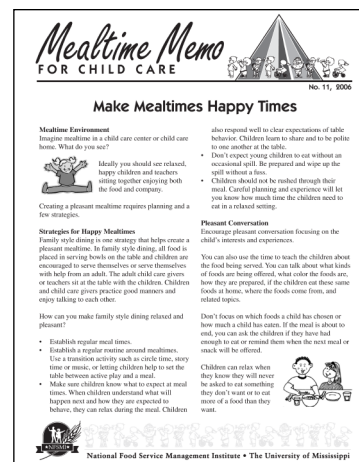
Do you need to reinforce the quality of family style meals in your program?

No. 8, 2006: Family Style Dining in Child Care

- * Brainstorm with the child care staff the benefits of family style meals for children's health, nutrition, and development. Distribute copies of this *Mealtime Memo* and add any missing benefits to the list generated by staff.

No. 11, 2006: Make Mealtimes Happy Times

- * Review strategies for pleasant mealtimes described on page 1 of this issue. Ask the child care staff to share their personal tips for positive mealtimes with young children. Brainstorm new ways to enhance mealtime environments in your program.



Do you want to improve the quality of nutrition education in your program?

No. 2, 2007: Steps to Planning a Nutrition Education Activity

- * Review the six steps to planning a nutrition education activity on page 1 of this issue. Ask the child care staff to use the six steps to plan a specific nutrition education activity for a specific age of children.

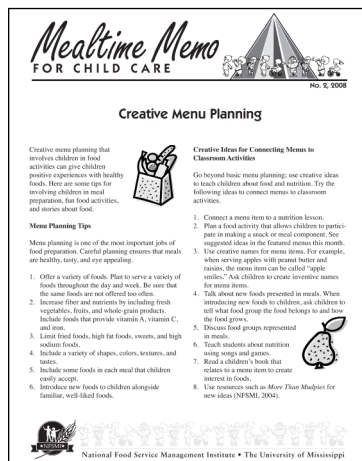
No. 3, 2007: Fun Food Lessons

- * Sing nutrition songs on page 1 of this issue. Ask the child care staff to share their favorite fun ways to provide food lessons to children. Develop a plan for adding at least two to three fun nutrition activities per week to your program's lesson plans.

Mealtime Memo FOR CHILD CARE

Do you want to improve the meals served in your child care?

Many past issues of *Mealtime Memos* focus on foodservice topics and make excellent resources for the annual training required by CACFP. Whether your program has just one cook in the kitchen or a foodservice department of several people, *Mealtime Memos* can be helpful for training staff and enhancing the quality of food served to children.



No. 2, 2008 Creative Menu Planning

- ❖ Use principles outlined on page 1 to revise recent menus. Brainstorm creative ways to introduce new foods to children and exciting ways to connect those foods and menus to other classroom activities.

No. 7, 2007: Using Seasonings in Cooking for Children

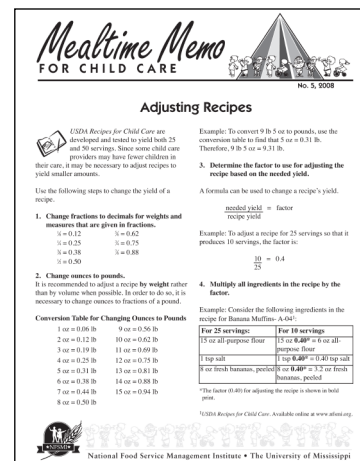
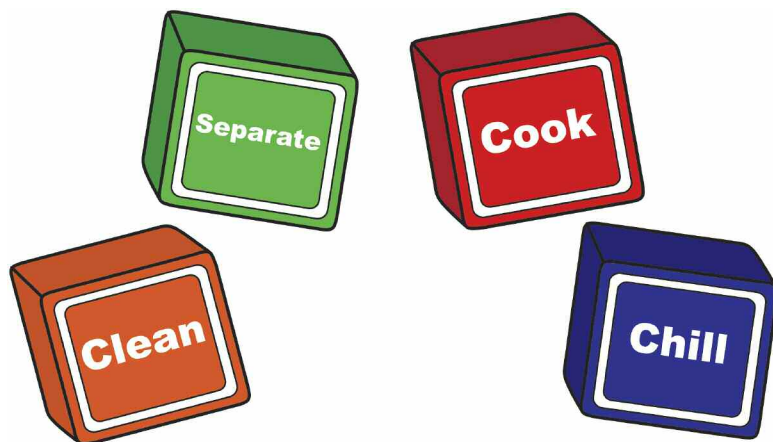
- ❖ Review current use of herbs, spices, and salt in menus served to children. Compare current use to suggestions on page 1 to determine if some additions and substitutions might enhance the flavor and nutritional quality of meals.

No. 5, 2008: Adjusting Recipes

- ❖ Discuss current use of *USDA Recipes for Child Care* in your program. Use the calculations on page 1 to adjust recipes for the servings needed at a meal in your program.

Use this lesson to train your child care staff on safe food preparation by following the four keys to food safety.

- Separate
- Cook
- Clean
- Chill



Recipe to Try

Macaroni and Ham Salad E10A¹

Water	1 gal 2 qt	Fresh celery, chopped	4 oz
Salt	1 Tbsp 1 tsp	Fresh onions, chopped	2 oz
Enriched elbow macaroni	1 lb 5 oz	Sweet pickle relish, undrained	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Reduced calorie salad dressing	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	Ground black or white pepper	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
OR		Dry mustard	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
Lowfat mayonnaise		Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
Cooked ham, water added, diced	1 lb 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Paprika	$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp
Fresh carrots, shredded	4 oz		

Heat water to rolling boil. Add the salt. Slowly add macaroni. Stir constantly, until water boils again. Cook for 10-12 minutes or until tender. Stir occasionally. Drain well. Rinse under cold water. Drain well. In a bowl, combine macaroni and salad dressing or mayonnaise. Mix. Add ham, carrots, celery, onions, pickle relish, pepper, dry mustard, salt, and paprika. Toss lightly. Spread 2 lb 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz (approximately 2 qt $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) into each pan (9" x 13" x 2"). For 25 servings, use 2 pans. CCP: Cool to 70 °F within 2 hours and from 70 °F to 41 °F or lower within an additional 4 hours. Cover. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Garnish with paprika.

Number of Servings: 16

Serving size: $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (No. 6 scoop) provides 1 oz cooked lean meat and the equivalent of 1 slice of bread.

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

Sources

Council for Professional Recognition's Child Development Associate Program. *National credentialing program, competency, standards*. Retrieved November 30, 2008, from www.cdacouncil.org

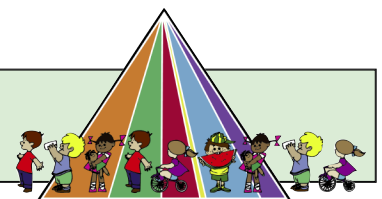
U.S. Department of Healthy and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. *Head start performance standards and other regulations: Child nutrition*. Retrieved November 30, 2008, from eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

MyPyramid for Preschoolers. Retrieved November 30, 2008, from www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers

National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies. *Child care workforce*. Retrieved November 30, 2008, from www.naccrra.org.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Nutrition Service, & National Food Service Management Institute. (2005). *USDA recipes for child care*. Retrieved November 30, 2008, from www.nfsmi.org

Subscribe to Mealtime Memo for Child Care online at www.nfsmi.org and receive the link to download the newsletter via e-mail each month!!



This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through a grant agreement with The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.